



NEWS

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DEAR SANTA: WE COULD USE SOME HELP

Business, Transportation & Housing Secretary Launches Traffic Crackdown

(SACRAMENTO) – Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak today personally launched **Operation Holiday Wish List**, an unprecedented multi-department traffic safety strike force for the holidays. Their mission is to save lives this Christmas and New Years season.

“I was disheartened that our highway deaths were up over the Thanksgiving holiday,” said Secretary McPeak. In response, McPeak directed the California Highway Patrol, the Department of Motor Vehicles, Caltrans, the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, and the Office of Traffic Safety to combine resources this holiday season. “I have directed all these departments to join forces for an increased education and enforcement campaign, named **Operation Holiday Wish List**, to turn the tide of death on California roadways this holiday season,” said McPeak.

Statewide the number of roadway deaths in California has risen at a troubling rate from 3,730 in 2000 to 4,225 in 2003.

Joined by directors of the five BTH traffic safety departments, McPeak even penned an open letter to Santa to enlist his aid, since Santa visits almost everyone in California during Christmas. “All we ask of you this year is to help us save lives. To accomplish this, we have three messages for you to deliver: ‘Click It or Ticket!’ ‘Obey the Speed Limits!’ and ‘You Drink, You Drive, You Lose!’, the letter stated.

Operation Holiday Wish List will run from today through January 2, 2005.

“The men and women of the CHP will deploy en mass, in a multifaceted approach never before employed,” stated CHP Commissioner Mike Brown. “The efforts will include 189 special speed enforcement details, 217 roving DUI task forces, and deployment of 81 radar trailers statewide, all working up to 12-hour shifts.”



ABC has scheduled every available sworn officer to work the streets during **Operation Holiday Wish List** to enforce alcohol sales laws. “We will check licensed establishments to ensure they are checking ID’s, not serving minors and not serving intoxicated patrons of any age,” said ABC Director Jerry Jolly. Through its highly successful TRACE program, ABC agents work closely with CHP officers to find suppliers of alcohol to minors involved in crashes or DUI’s.

DMV Director Joan Borucki also had a warning to drivers planning to attend functions where alcohol will be consumed. “We want to remind Californians that anyone arrested for DUI will get a suspension of his or her driver’s license.” The DMV will expand its massive traffic safety education campaign with voice and printed reminders when the public contacts DMV offices.

Caltrans will bring **Operation Holiday Wish List** safe driving messages right into motorist’s cars this year. “We will activate roadside changeable message signs reminding motorists of the importance of highway safety,” stated Caltrans Director Will Kempton. Caltrans also reminds drivers to slow for the cone zone as their crews will continue to work construction projects through the holiday season.

Many crash deaths can be easily prevented, noted OTS Interim Director Christopher J. Murphy. “Wear your seat belt on each and every trip. It only takes two seconds and can make the difference between life and death,” stated Murphy. While federal statistics show that over ninety percent of Californians do buckle-up, between 50 and 75 percent of victims in fatal crashes are unbuckled.

OTS provides grant money to police departments for local traffic safety programs. These are beginning to pay off explained Fresno police chief Jerry Dyer. “Through maximum education and increased enforcement, we’re seeing a reduction in alcohol-related fatalities in Fresno,” stated Chief Dyer.

Last Christmas 61 people were killed throughout the state in traffic crashes during the four-day holiday. Over the New Year’s holiday last year 44 people died. The traffic safety organizations involved in **Operation Holiday Wish List** are committed to reversing the trend and appeal to the media for help in spreading this message of life to all Californians this holiday season.

H a p p y H o l i d a y s !!

Additional Contacts:

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Dear Santa:



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- ✓ Click It or Ticket!
- ✓ Obey the Speed Limits!
- ✓ You Drink, You Drive, You Lose!

Will Kuyper

Sunne Wright McPeak

Sunne Wright McPeak
Secretary

Business, Transportation and
Housing Agency

CMH

John Jolly

Joan Bowe